

# “Can You Prove there is a God?”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

Recently a series of books by scientists and polemicists have argued that religion is pernicious and God unprovable. While it is true that religion, like every great human passion and drive can be both life giving and destructive, it is worth conceding the central claim: God is indeed unprovable. Thank God. That is part of the glory of *bitachon*.

“The heavens declare the glory of God ... there is no speech, there are no words, their voice is not heard (Ps. 19).” The Psalmist explains: The heavens are mute, but one who listens with a discerning ear can still hear their message. Despite many reasons for belief, belief is not a rational proposition, but an orientation of the soul. For years, in both Jewish and secular colleges, I have taught philosophy of religion. I have outlined for students the ‘proofs’ for God: teleological, ontological, and cosmological. Never at the end of a class have I had a student stand up, clap his hand to his forehead, and shout, “Now I believe!”

Bitachon means trust. Trust in God is not blindness to the savagery and pain that saturate the world. Trust is built on a relationship that can be felt, understood, experienced, but never proved. Trust in God can elevate the soul in difficult times, and leads, at its best, not to harshness or condemnation but to gentleness, understanding, *chesed* — kindness. To proclaim one cannot find God in the laboratory is like declaring one does not fall in love through a multiple choice exam — true, but to the lover, laughably irrelevant.